

## Message Text

SECRET

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43

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-20 AGR-20 COME-00 IGA-02 EB-11

CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 SS-20 NSC-10 L-03 PM-07

OMB-01 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 DRC-01 /121 W

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O 121126Z OCT 73

FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

TO AMEMBASSY SAIGON IMMEDIATE

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3373

CJCS IMMEDIATE

SECDEF IMMEDIATE

CINCPAC IMMEDIATE

COMUSSAG IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T PHNOM PENH 11036

FOR STATE/AID

FOR AMBASSADOR MARTIN FROM ENDERS

FOR DIRECTOR ROBINSON FROM OLMSTED

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EGEN, EAID, CB

SUBJECT: CAMBODIA RICE CRISIS

REFS: OLMSTED/ROBINSON TELECON AND OLMSTED/SHARPE TELCON

OCTOBER 12, 1973 (B) PHNOM PENH 11015 (C) PHNOM PENH

10996 (D) PHNOM PENH 10994 (E) PHNOM PENH 10234

1. THE RECENT TYPHOON IN THIS AREA HAS DEALT A DISASTROUS BLOW TO THE ALREADY DIFFICULT RICE SUPPLY SITUATION HERE. AS OF TODAY THERE IS LESS THAN A 12-DAYS' SUPPLY OF RICE FOR PHNOM PENH AND THE AREA SUPPLIED FROM PHNOM PENH IN GOVERNMENT STOCK. THIS INCLUDES RICE FOR THE ARMY. MUCH OF THAT IS IN BROKENS OF THE POOREST QUALITY WHICH HAS NOT HERETOFORE BEEN CONSIDERED FIT FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION. SOME OF THIS STOCK

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IS IN PADDY WHICH THE RICE MILLS HERE, EVEN WORKING OVERTIME,

CANNOT MILL FAST ENOUGH. WHAT THIS MEANS IS THAT FOR ALL PRACTICAL PURPOSES, GOVERNMENT-HELD STOCKS ARE DOWN TO ABOUT A FIVE DAYS' SUPPLY.

2. WE HAD BEEN COUNTING ON THE NEXT SHIPLOAD OF RICE FROM THAILAND TO ARRIVE ON THE 15TH, IN WHICH CASE WE WOULD JUST GET BY. HOWEVER, THE TYPHOON HAS DELAYED ALL SHIPPING AND THE EARLIEST THAT SHIP CAN BE HERE IS THE 22ND. FOR ALL PRACTICAL PURPOSES, GOVERNMENT STOCKS WILL RUN OUT NEXT WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 17. WE NEED RICE BEFORE THAT.

3. WE ARE EXPLORING U.S. AIRLIFTING OF RICE FROM THAILAND. HOWEVER VIRTUALLY ALL AIRLIFT CAPACITY IN AREA IS BEING DEVOTED FOR AMMUNITION AND SOME ALREADY FOR RICE FROM THE WESTERN PROVINCES. IN ORDER TO MOUNT AN AIRLIFT OF SIGNIFICANT CAPABILITY, ONE OF ABOUT 300 TONS A DAY, AIRCRAFT WOULD HAVE TO BE BROUGHT IN FROM OUTSIDE AREA. THIS WOULD TAKE SEVERAL DAYS AND NO DOUBT GENERATE MUCH PUBLICITY. THERE IS ALSO A PHYSICAL LIMITATION AT THE PHNOM PENH AIRPORT WHICH LIMITS USEFULNESS OF AIRLIFT FOR THIS PURPOSE.

4. WE ARE THEREFORE COMPELLED TO SEEK ANOTHER AND IMMEDIATE LOAN OF RICE UP TO 5,000 TONS FROM VIENTAM AND IMMEDIATE SHIPMENT, IF AT ALL POSSIBLE. A WEEK'S SUPPLY OF RICE, STARTING TO ARRIVE HERE SOMETIME NEXT WEEK BY SPECIAL MEKONG CONVOY WILL MAKE ALL THE DIFFERENCE. PAYBACK WITHIN A MONTH FROM THAI OR KOREAN PL480 SHIPMENTS.

5. WE WOULD BE GREATFUL FOR ANY EFFORTS YOU CAN MAKE TO INTERCEDE WITH THE GVN TO HELP US OUT.  
ENDERS

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NNN

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